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USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
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CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - ASEAN SUMMIT AND
PUTIN'S PRE-ELECTION STRATEGY

LEAD STORIES: All Japanese national dailies in their Wednesday morning editions front-paged the successful creation of induced pluripotent stem cells, which resemble embryonic stem cells, from human skin by a Japanese research team and another group at the University of Wisconsin.

1. "Rough Road Toward Community" The liberal Mainichi's Singapore correspondent wrote (11/21): "In its leaders' summit on Tuesday, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Charter, which sets forth the organization's legal and other frameworks. While the charter is considered the basic principles upon which the group hopes to build a community by 2015, it appears that the leaders prioritized ideals and set aside the differing political systems and economic disparities among members. Forging a community is not an easy task."

2. "Concerns Remain About Realizing ASEAN Charter" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun reported from Singapore (11/21): "In its preamble, the ASEAN Charter highlights the organization's commitment to the rule of law, democracy, and respect for human rights. Given that the charter does not have clauses mandating that its members abide by these ideas, however, concerns remain that the Charter could end up as nothing more than pie in the sky. The fact that the assembled leaders had trouble dealing with issues related to Burma just the night before is symbolic, as it raises doubts about the significance of the Charter.... While some in the course of drafting the Charter had called for a review

of such principles as unanimous consensus and noninterference in domestic affairs, these ideas were preserved in the end due to opposition from Vietnam and Burma. There is a possibility that this could undermine ASEAN's transformation into a community."

13. "Russia Placing Importance on 'Stability' Toward Putin Dynasty" The conservative Sankei's Moscow-based reporter noted: "The December 2 parliamentary election appears to be turning into a vote of confidence by Russian voters that would elevate President Putin into the role of supreme ruler and prolonging his tenure. The Putin government is obsessed with creating a dictatorship reminiscent of Czarist Russia, and the opposition has little hope of stopping the move.... After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia at one point attempted to create a Western-style democracy. After a period of chaos, however, President Putin emerged and took strong-arm measures to rebuild Russia by suppressing free speech and political opposition, enhancing the police state, and creating crony capitalism starting with renationalization of the energy sector. Is there a 'Czar Putin' in the making? Together with the spring presidential election, the upcoming parliamentary vote is bound to have a significant impact on Russia's future."

SCHIEFFER